

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 271044Z JUL 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4630
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16536

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y P A R A 5

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (CHRISTOPHER, WARREN)
SUBJECT: VISIT OF DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER TO BANGKOK

SUMMARY: DURING 30-HOUR VISIT TO BANGKOK JULY 24-25 DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER AND PARTY MET WITH SELECTION OF THAI FIGURES IN AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT, CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER THANIN AND FOREIGN MINISTER UPPADIT, AND MET WITH MISSION STAFF. DEPUTY SECRETARY GAVE DEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE JULY 25 AT WHICH HE DEPLORED FIGHTING ON THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER, NOTED HE HAD DISCUSSED HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE WITH PRIME MINISTER, AND EXPRESSED U.S. APPRECIATION FOR THAI RECEPTION OF INDONCHINESE REFUGEES. DEPUTY SECRETARY TOLD PRESS U.S. IS PREPARED TO ASSIST OTHER GOVERNMENTS IN CONTROLLING NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. EVENTS OF THIS SHORT BUT ACTION-FILLED VISIT WERE EXTENSIVELY REPORTED IN THAI MEDIA, BUT NO
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EDITORIAL COMMENT TO DATE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE VISIT OF DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER TO BANGKOK JULY 24-25 HAS BEEN VERY WELL RECEIVED HERE WITH FRONT PAGE COVERAGE GIVEN TO HIS PUBLIC REMARKS AND PRIVATE APPRECIATION EXPRESSED BY THAI OFFICIALS FOR USG INTEREST IN THAILAND WHICH THE TRIP REPRESENTED. THE DEPUTY

SECRETARY'S VISIT INCLUDED FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

2. ON SUNDAY, JULY 24, DEPUTY SECRETARY AND PARTY ARRIVED FROM NEW DELHI, HAD AN INFORMAL LUNCH WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND MET WITH MEMBERS OF THE COUNTRY TEAM IN THE AFTERNOON. AT A DINNER THAT EVENING, THE DEPT SECRETARY MET SEVERAL THAI OFFICIALS, INCLUDING DEFENSE MINISTER SA-NGAT, AND COMMERCE MINISTER SUTHI, AS WELL AS FORMER PRIME MINISTER SENI AND FORMER MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS PHICHAI.

3. ON MONDAY, JULY 25, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY MET WITH MEMBERS OF EMBASSY STAFF AND CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER THANIN KRAIWICHEN. DURING THE 45 MINUTE MEETING, PRIME MINISTER THANIN RENEWED HIS COMMITMENT TO THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC, WHICH HE CONSIDERED A THAI DOMESTIC PROBLEM AS WELL AS AN INTERNATIONAL ONE. HE REITERATED THAILAND'S FRIENDSHIP FOR THE UNITED STATES AND SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THE U.S., BOTH BILATERALLY AND THROUGH CONSULTATIONS IN THE ASEAN FRAMEWORK. ON SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, THANIN SAID THE RTG RESOLUTELY OPPOSES USE OF TORTURE AND STRESSES THIS POINT TO ITS POLICE OFFICERS. HE ALSO SAID THAILAND HAS NO PRISONERS WHICH CAN BE CALLED "POLITICAL" IN THE INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED DEFINITION OF THAT WORD. ALTHOUGH THANIN RECOGNIZED THAT ARTICLE 21 DOES INVOLVE INFRINGEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS, IN THAT IT PERMITS SUMMARY

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TRIALS, ITS USE IS LIMITED AND CAREFULLY HANDLED THROUGH REVIEWS AT THREE LEVELS -- A JUDICIAL COMMITTEE, THE CABINET AND THE PRIME MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL. USE OF ARTICLE 21 WAS JUSTIFIED IN ORDER TO PERMIT EXPEDITIOUS ACTION IN COMBATING CRIMES SUCH AS NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AND RAPE-KILLING. THANIN THEN EXPLAINED RTG APPROACH TO GUIDED DEMOCRACY AND ITS EVENTUAL GOAL OF FULL PARTICIPATION BY THE PEOPLE IN GOVERNMENT. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY AGREED WITH THE OBJECTIVE AND NOTED THAT, WHILE THE U.S. RECOGNIZED IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL SECURITY, NATIONAL SECURITY SHOULD NOT BE USED AS AN EXCUSE FOR PERMANENTLY DENYING HUMAN RIGHTS.

4. THANIN THEN REVIEWED RECENT CAMBODIAN BORDER INCIDENT AND SAID THAT RTG WOULD CONTINUE TO TRY TO REACT ONLY LOCALLY TO SUCH INCIDENTS; VIET-NAM AND LAOS BOTH HAD WORSE BORDER PROBLEMS WITH CAMBODIA THAN DID THE THAI. THANIN SAID THAT RELATIONS WITH BURMA WERE SATISFACTORY AND IMPROVING. HE WAS NOT RPT NOT SATISFIED WITH THE CURRENT STATE OF THAI RELATIONS WITH PRC, AND HE WOULD PREFER TO SEE IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THAIWAN. PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR BALANCED CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY GIVEN BY

DEPUTY ASST. SECRETARY OAKLEY ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAILAND.
MEETING WAS VERY CORDIAL.

5. CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER UPPADIT INCLUDED GENERAL REVIEW OF THAI-U.S. RELATIONS AND THAI RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. UPPADIT SAID RTG HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN CONCERNED THAT USG WAS TURNING ITS BACK ON SOUTHEAST ASIA, BUT HAD RECENTLY BEEN ENCOURAGED BY STATEMENT FROM HIGH-RANKING USG OFFICIALS AND NOW BY VISIT OF DEPUTY SECRETARY HIMSELF. UPPADIT NOTED THAT, DESPITE UNFRIENDLY TONE OF LAO-VIETNAMESE COMMUNIQUE OF JULY 19, ASEAN COUNTRIES WOULD CONTINUE ATTEMPTING TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS AND THAILAND WOULD STAND BY AUGUST 6 SRV/RTG COMMUNIQUE. UPPADIT SAID THAILAND HOPED JULY 26
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MEETING OF MEKHONG COMMISSION IN VIENTIANE WOULD BE STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION FOR IMPROVING TIES. HE ALSO SAID THAT RTG WISHES TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE PRC AND HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM PRC AMBASSADOR THAT PRC CONSIDERED OCTOBER 6 MILITARY TAKEOVER AN INTERNAL THAI AFFAIRS.

6. DEPUTY SECRETARY GAVE DEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE DURING WHICH HE SAID THE U.S. DEPLORES RECENT BORDER FIGHTING BETWEEN THAILAND AND CAMBODIA AND HOPES BOTH COUNTRIES WILL MEET SOON TO PREVENT FUTURE CLASHES. ASKED ABOUT POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MANILA PACT, HE SAID THAT ANY THAI REQUESTS FOR U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE WOULD BE GIVEN EARNEST CONSIDERATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH U.S. CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID HE HAD TOLD PRIME MINISTER THANIN OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S CONCEPT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HAD EXPRESSED U.S. APPRECIATION FOR THAILAND'S GENEROSITY IN RECEIVING REFUGEES FROM INDO-CHINA. HE SAID THAT THE U.S. WAS PREPARED ON A COLLECTIVE BASIS AND WERE ASKED TO ASSIST GOVERNMENTS IN CONTROLLING NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AND SEEKING TO IDENTIFY CROPS THAT COULD SUBSTITUTE FOR OPIUM. PRESS CONFERENCE RECEIVED WIDE ATTENTION IN JULY 26 PRESS. THERE HAS BEEN NO EDITORIAL COMMENT TO DATE.
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DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER AND PARTY MET WITH SELECTION
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